

**DEPARTMENT OF
PUBLIC HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**



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To: All TANF Cash Assistance Policy Manual Holders

From: Del Bock, TANF Program Policy Specialist
Public Assistance Bureau, Central Office.

Subject: TANF Cash Assistance Bulletin TB-38

Please place this bulletin at the beginning of the TANF Manual, Section 701-4.

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SECTION: Case Management
WoRC Participation, Documentation and Reconciliation

SUBJECT: Excused Absences and Holidays

EFFECTIVE DATE: Immediately

INTRODUCTION: TANF Reauthorization regulations contained in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 (DRA) allow TANF participants involved in unpaid allowable work activities 10 excused absence days. The regulations also allow for the State to define and count reasonable absences due to holidays.

Current policy indicates that the number of excused absence days allowed for a TANF participant cannot exceed 10 in a federal fiscal year (October – September). Current policy indicates that TANF participants are allowed federally recognized holidays as “leave days”.

After clarification and comments from ACF on the TANF Work Verification Plan policy regarding both the excused absence days and holidays was changed as follows:

EXCUSED ABSENCE DAYS POLICY: The number of excused absence days allowed for a TANF participant will now be limited to no more than 10 **in any 12-month period**. This will ensure that participants who begin receiving TANF cash assistance late in the fiscal year are provided the same benefit as those who have received TANF cash assistance for a longer period of time within the fiscal year.

The 12-month period will begin with the first month of TANF benefits received following application and extend 12 months forward.

Example: Joe applies for TANF on 9/25/07 but asks that TANF begin 10/1/07. The first month in the 12-month period is 10/07.

**BREAK IN TANF
CASH ASSISTANCE:**

If a TANF participant has a break in receipt of TANF cash assistance for any reason for at least one month, a new 12-month period begins.

Example: Joe applies for and receives TANF from 10/1/07 until 3/31/08. TANF closes effective 3/31/08. During the time period from 10/1/07—3/31/08 Joe uses all 10 of his excused absences. On 5/16/08 Joe reapplies for TANF and is eligible effective 5/16/08. A new 12-month period begins effective 05/08 and would continue forward for 12 months.

**LIMITATIONS ON
EXCUSED ABSENCES:**

The following limitations on use of the excused absence days apply:

1. The participant must have good cause, as defined in TANF 1509-1) for not participating;
2. The participant may not use more than two (2) excused absences in one month;
3. The participant may not exceed 10 excused absences in any 12-month period; and
4. The use of the excused absence days is limited to unpaid allowable work activities.

**TRACKING OF
EXCUSED ABSENCES:**

WoRC Case Managers are still required to manually track the use of the excused absence days in the WoRC case file to ensure the limitations are met.

**RECONCILIATION OF
EXCUSED ABSENCES:**

If the TANF participant meets the above criteria for an excused absence, eight (8) hours should be reconciled toward the specific activity/component, in addition to all other actual, verified participation hours. This may result in full hours being reconciled on EMPR. A TEAMS case note must be entered regarding the use of the excused absence.

Example: Joe is scheduled to participate in a WEX placement for 33 hours per week in April. He is absent from the WEX site one day due to illness. He completes full WEX participation the rest of the week (25 hours) as verified by the WEX site supervisor. The WoRC Case Manager verifies that Joe has an excused absence day available. The WoRC case manager would reconcile a full 33 hours of WEX on EMPR for the week.

If the TANF participant has good cause for not participating, but does not have an excused absence day available, the activity/component will be reconciled only with actual, verified participation hours on EMPR. A sanction would not be recommended however as good cause exists.

Example: Same scenario as above. Joe is scheduled to participate in a WEX placement for 33 hours per week in April. He is absent from the WEX site one day due to illness. He completes full WEX participation the rest of the week (25 hours) as verified by the WEX site supervisor. The WoRC Case Manager verifies that Joe has already used 2 excused absences in April. The WoRC Case Manager would reconcile the actual 25 hours of participation on EMPR for the week. However, a sanction would not be recommended as Joe has good cause for non-participation

HOLIDAYS POLICY:

The number of holidays allowed for a TANF participant will now be limited to **no more than 10** in any Federal Fiscal year (October 1 – September 30). The State has designated the following holidays as allowable holidays, no other holidays are allowed:

Columbus Day
Veteran's Day
Thanksgiving
Christmas
New Year's Day
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
President's Day
Memorial Day
4th of July
Labor Day

NOTE: Because of the limitations of the holidays to 10 within any Federal Fiscal year, the "count" of holidays does not start over if there is a break in TANF assistance.

LIMITATIONS ON HOLIDAYS:

The following limitations on use of the holidays apply:

1. The participant must be involved in an **unpaid** allowable work activity or, if participating in employment and the place of employment is closed for the holiday, the participant must be paid for the holiday;

NOTE: If the participant is involved in employment, the place of employment is closed but the individual is **not paid** for the holiday, there is no leave day allowed for the holiday. (The participant may make up the lost hours in another activity or throughout the month.)

2. The participant must have been scheduled to participate in the activity; and

3. The holiday must be included in the list of the allowable holidays above.

TRACKING OF HOLIDAYS:

WoRC Case Managers are still required to manually track the use of the holiday in the WoRC case file to ensure the limitations are met.

RECONCILIATION OF HOLIDAYS:

If the TANF participant meets the above criteria for a holiday absence, eight (8) hours should be reconciled toward the specific activity/component, in addition to all other actual, verified participation hours. This may result in full hours being reconciled on EMPR. A TEAMS case note must be entered regarding the use of the holiday.

Example: Susie is scheduled to participate in a WEX placement at Rocky Mountain Federal Credit Union for 33 hours per week in October. The credit union is closed on Columbus Day. Susie does not make up the hours missed that day, but does complete full WEX participation the rest of the week, as verified by the WEX site supervisor. The WoRC Case Manager verifies that Columbus Day is one of the allowed holidays. The WoRC Case Manager would reconcile a full 33 hours of WEX on EMPR for the week.

Example: John is employed part-time at McDonald's. He is scheduled to work 20 hours per week and has negotiated the employment of 20 hours as an allowable activity on his EP. He is also scheduled to complete 20 hours a week at a WEX site at Good Samaritan.

McDonald's is closed on Christmas and John is not given additional shifts that week. He only works 16 hours that week, as verified by pay stubs. John is not paid for the holiday. The WoRC Case Manager would reconcile 16 hours of EMP on EMPR for the week and attempt to reconcile another primary activity for the additional hours. John may make up the additional hours throughout the month.

Good Samaritan is also closed on Christmas. John completes the remaining hours of WEX during the week. Because John meets the criteria for a holiday absence, the WoRC Case Manager would reconcile 20 hours of WEX on EMPR for the week.

Example: John is employed part-time at McDonald's. He is scheduled to work 20 hours per week and has negotiated the employment of 20 hours as an allowable activity on his EP. He is also scheduled to complete 20 hours a week of self-directed job search.

John verifies that he completed 12 hours of self-directed job search in the week. He is given a holiday absence for Christmas of eight (8) hours. The WoRC Case Manager would reconcile 20 hours of JBS on EMPR for the week.

McDonald's is closed on Christmas and John is not given additional shifts that week. He only works 16 hours that week, as verified by pay stubs. John is not paid for the holiday. The WoRC Case Manager would reconcile 16 hours of EMP on EMPR for the week and attempt to reconcile another primary activity for the additional hours. John may make up the additional hours throughout the month; if not, he is out of compliance and may be sanctioned.

UPDATED MANUAL MATERIAL WILL BE DISTRIBUTED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. UNTIL THAT TIME, USE THIS BULLETIN AS A GUIDE. IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR WORC MONITOR OR REGIONAL POLICY SPECIALIST.

Thank you.